



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

RWANDAN CHILD SMUGGLER SENTENCED

NEW HAVEN, CT. -- Kevin J. O'Connor, U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut, and Robin Avers, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) New England, announced that ABIBA KANZAYIRE, age 37, a native and citizen of Rwanda, was sentenced today on her convictions for illegally encouraging alien children to come to the United States, and for illegally bringing an alien child into the United States.

During proceedings this morning in New Haven federal court, Senior United States District Judge Ellen Bree Burns sentenced KANZAYIRE to time served. KANZAYIRE has been detained since her arrest on December 17, 2003. On September 9, 2004, KANZAYIRE pleaded guilty, admitting that she obtained from the United States consulate in Burundi visas for children that she represented were her own biological children, and then used those visas on several occasions in 2002 and 2003 to smuggle imposter children into the United States. As a condition of her conviction, KANZAYIRE will be deported to Rwanda.

"The safety and welfare of children is of paramount importance to this Office," U.S. Attorney O'Connor stated. "Smuggling children is a dangerous endeavor where profit, rather than a child's well-being, is the common motive. We will diligently investigate and prosecute these crimes."

"Child smuggling is an absolutely reprehensible crime," added Robin Avers, Special Agent in Charge, ICE-New England. "The importance of bringing individuals like this to justice cannot be overstated. The protection of children from smugglers and other predators remains a very high priority of ICE, and we will continue to aggressively pursue any person or organization that attempts to smuggle or exploit a child."

The case was investigated by Special Agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Department of Homeland Security, Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Officers of the United States Customs and Border Protection, and assisted by the Connecticut State Police. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Krishna R. Patel.

#ICE#

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.